United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General expresses alarm at escalation of violence between Israel and Lebanon; Force Commander of UNIFIL to contact both sides to urge maximum restraint; ICRC appeals to parties to respect international humanitarian law and to spare civilians.

+ Co-Chairmen of Yugoslavia Conference expect Bosnia and Herzegovina peace talks to begin at noon tomorrow in Geneva; will meet informally with Bosnian President tonight.

+ Force Commander of UNPROFOR says preparatory steps are being taken, in coordination with NATO, to provide air support for implementation of mandate to protect safe areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ UNFICYP protests after twelve personnel are injured by demonstrators violating Cyprus Buffer Zone from south; says police authorities did not cooperate in maintaining Zone's integrity.

+ CSCE Council Chairman says refusal of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to allow continuation of CSCE missions in Kosovo, Sandzak and Vojvodina increases threat to peace in region.

+ UNOSOM II to hold second informal consultation with donors in Nairobi tomorrow.

+ International Court of Justice forms special seven-member Chamber for Environmental Matters to deal with developments in environmental law.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed alarm and concern at the escalation of violence between Israel and Lebanon, after receiving a report from the Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on the situation in the area. In a statement issued today, the Secretary-General deplored Israeli attacks against Lebanon, in which many civilians had been killed and wounded. He equally deplored rocket attacks against northern Israel which had killed and wounded several civilians.

(more)

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The Secretary-General said the Force Commander of UNIFIL had been instructed to contact both sides, and to urge them to exercise maximum restraint.

In a related development, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) today appealed to all parties involved in military operations in Lebanon and Israel to respect international humanitarian law, and in particular to spare the civilian population and civilian property. ICRC said it was deeply concerned about the latest developments and their consequences in humanitarian terms in both Lebanon and northern Israel.

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The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, expect that talks to settle the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina will begin around noon tomorrow, according to a United Nations spokesman.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic was in Geneva and would meet informally with the Co-Chairmen this evening, the spokesman said. The other participants in the talks were expected to arrive in the city tomorrow. The Co-Chairmen would meet with the individual delegations before the talks began in plenary.

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General Jean Cot, Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), has said preparatory steps are currently being taken to implement Security Council resolution 836 (1993). That resolution authorizes UNPROFOR to use force to protect "safe areas" in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Responding to questions about developments in the Close Air Support Operation, General Cot said on Friday that UNPROFOR, in coordination with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), was preparing to ensure that its mandate could be carried out. Measures to achieve a viable level of air power had begun and technical elements were being deployed on the ground to support them.

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Twelve members of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) were injured yesterday when some 250 demonstrators forcibly entered the United Nations-controlled Buffer Zone from the south, according to a United Nations spokesman. Demonstrators had approached the northern perimeter of the Zone at three locations, and at one they had thrown stones and Molotov cocktails at Turkish Cypriot personnel temporarily deployed a short distance forward of their cease-fire line. UNFICYP had informed the demonstrators beforehand that the routes they wished to take were unacceptable, and had also made its position clear to the Government authorities, including the Cyprus Police.

(more)

The spokesman said that there could have been very serious consequences had it not been for the conscientious response on the part of UNFICYP and restraint on the Turkish side. Maintenance of the integrity of the Buffer Zone was the responsibility of UNFICYP alone, but required the cooperation of the public and of the police authorities; such cooperation had been lacking yesterday. UNFICYP would protest all the unauthorized incursions into the Buffer Zone as well as the attacks on its personnel and property, he stressed.

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Margaretha af Ugglas, Foreign Minister of Sweden and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), has expressed deep regret at the refusal of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to allow CSCE missions in Kosovo, Sandzak and Vojvodina to continue their activities. In a letter transmitted to the Security Council by Sweden's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, she said the refusal increased the threat to peace and security in the region, noting that the value of the missions had been recognized by all concerned, including the Government of the Federal Republic.

The letter called on the Federal Republic to change its course and to live up to the norms and principles it had accepted as a CSCE participating State. Meanwhile, the CSCE would continue to keep the situation in Kosovo, Sandzak and Vojvodina under review.

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The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) will hold a second informal consultation with donors on 27 July in Nairobi, according to a United Nations spokesman. Representatives from 41 donors, 21 international non-governmental organizations and 20 United Nations agencies are expected to attend.

Three working groups at the consultation are expected to address the following issues: resources for the Somalia relief and rehabilitation programme; roles and responsibilities of the partners involved in the Somali mission; and planning for the future.

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The International Court of Justice has decided to form a special seven-member Chamber for Environmental Matters in view of recent developments in the field of environmental law. Two of the eleven cases currently on the Court's docket have important implications for international law on matters relating to the environment. The Court had previously considered forming a chamber to deal with environmental matters, but had chosen instead to deal with environmental cases through the constitution of an ad hoc chamber rather than through the creation of a standing special chamber.

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